

# The SpecC Methodology

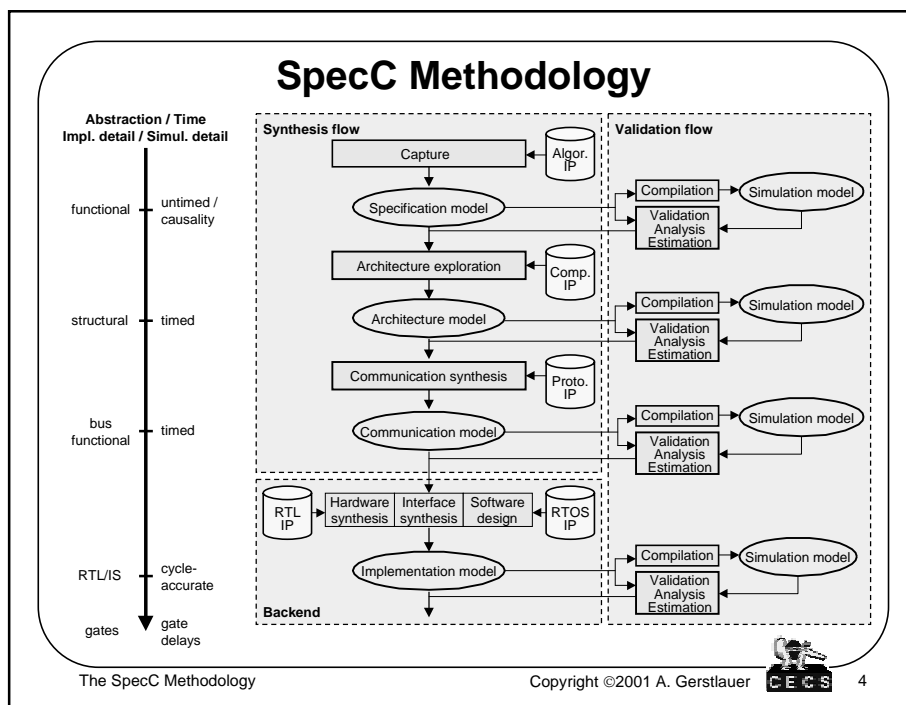
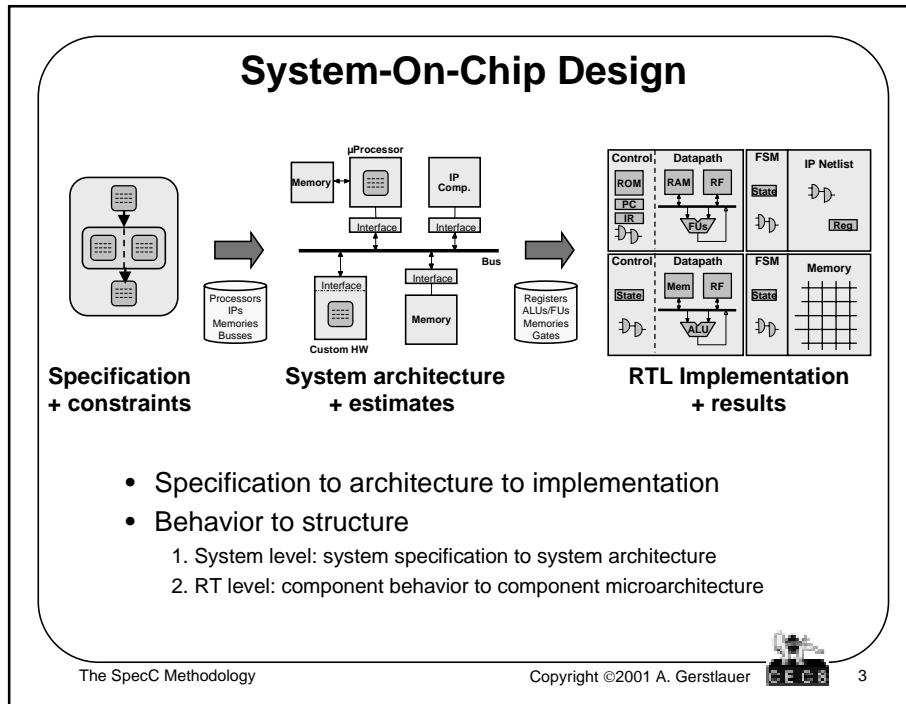
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Center for Embedded Computer Systems  
University of California, Irvine  
<http://www.cecs.uci.edu/~SpecC/>



## Outline

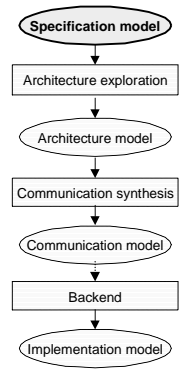
- **System design**
- **SpecC design methodology**
- **Specification model**
- **Architecture model**
- **Communication model**
- **Implementation model**
- **Summary & Conclusions**






## Specification Model

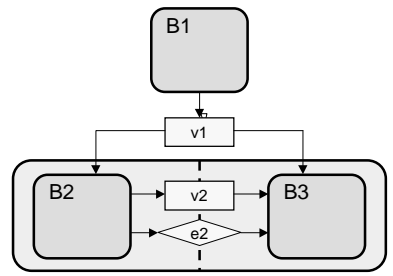
- **High-level, abstract model**
  - Pure system functionality
  - Algorithmic behavior
  - No implementation details
- **No implicit structure / architecture**
  - Behavioral hierarchy
- **Untimed**
  - Executes in zero (logical) time
  - Causal ordering
  - Events only for synchronization



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## Specification Model Example



Leaf behaviors:

```

behavior B1( out int v1 ) {
  void main(void) {
    ...
    v1 = ...
  };
}
behavior B2( in int v1,
            out int v2,
            out event e2 ) {
  void main(void) {
    ...
    v2 = f2( v1, ... );
    notify( v2 );
    ...
  };
}
behavior B3( in int v1,
            in int v2,
            in event e2 ) {
  void main(void) {
    ...
    wait( e2 );
    f3( v1, v2, ... );
    ...
  };
}

```


Design hierarchy:

```

behavior Design() {
  int v1;
  B1 b1 ( v1 );
  B2B3 b2b3( v1 );
  void main(void) {
    b1.main();
    b2b3.main();
  };
}
behavior B2B3( in int v1 ) {
  int v2;
  event e2;
  B2 b2( v1, v2, e2 );
  B3 b3( v1, v2, e2 );
  void main(void) {
    par {
      b2.main(); b3.main();
    };
  };
}

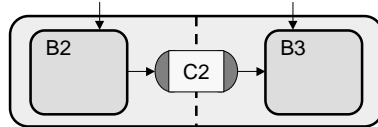
```

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## Specification Model Example (2)

- **Message-passing communication**
  - Abstract communication
  - Encapsulate communication



Blocking, unbuffered message-passing channel:

```
interface ISend {
    void send( void *d, int size );
};
interface IRecv {
    void recv( void *d, int size );
};
channel ChMP() implements ISend, IRecv {
    void send( void *d, int size ) { ... }
    void recv( void *d, int size ) { ... }
};
```

```
behavior B2( in int v1,
            ISend c2 ) {
    void main(void) {
        ...
        v2 = f2( v1, ... );
        c2.send( &v2, sizeof(v2) );
        ...
    }
};

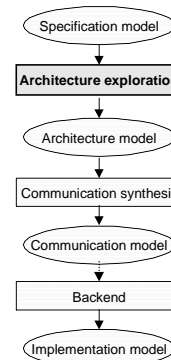
behavior B3( in int v1,
            IRecv c2 ) {
    void main(void) {
        ...
        c2.recv( &v2, sizeof(v2) );
        f3( v1, v2, ... );
        ...
    }
};

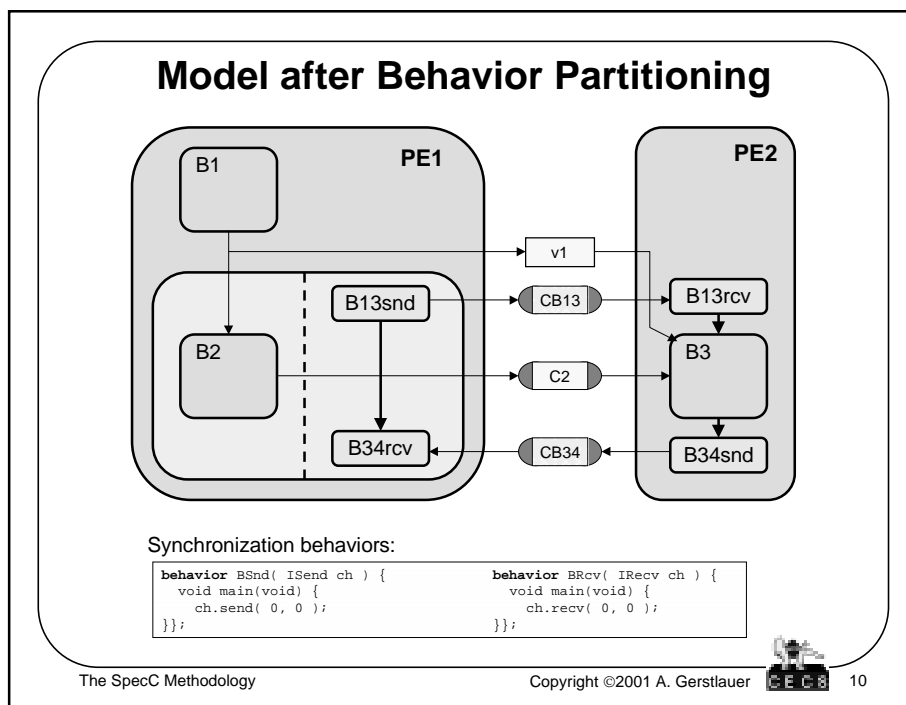
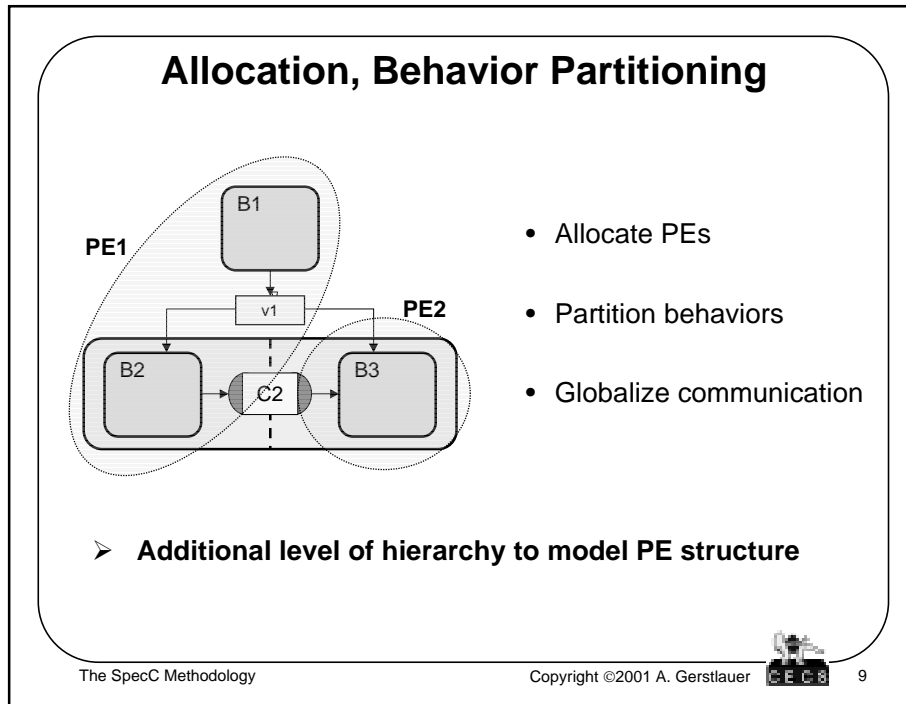
behavior B2B3( in int v1 ) {
    ChMP c2();
    B2 b2( v1, c2 );
    B3 b3( v1, c2 );
    void main(void) {
        par {
            b2.main(); b3.main();
        }
    }
};
```



## Architecture Exploration

- **Component allocation / selection**
- **Behavior partitioning**
- **Variable partitioning**
- **Scheduling**





## Model after Behavior Partitioning (2)

```

behavior PE1( in int v1,
              ISend cb13,
              ISend c2,
              IRecv cb34 ) {
  B1 b1 ( v1 );
  B2B3 b2b3( v1, cb13, c2, cb34 );

  void main(void) {
    b1.main();
    b2b3.main();
  };
};

behavior B2B3( in int v1,
              ISend cb13,
              ISend c2,
              IRecv cb34 ) {
  B2 b2 ( v1, c2 );
  B3stub b3stub( cb13, cb34 );

  void main(void) {
    par {
      b2.main(); b3stub.main();
    };
};

behavior B3stub( ISend cb13,
                IRecv cb34 ) {
  BSnd b13snd( cb13 );
  BRcv b34rcv( cb34 );

  void main(void) {
    b13snd.main();
    b34rcv.main();
  };
};

```

```

behavior PE2( in int v1,
              IRecv cb13,
              IRecv c2,
              ISend cb34 ) {
  BRcv b13rcv( cb13 );
  B3 b3 ( v1, c2 );
  BSnd b34snd( cb34 );

  void main(void) {
    b13rcv.main();
    b3.main();
    b34snd.main();
  };
};

```

```

behavior Design() {
  int v1;
  ChMP cb13(), c2(), cb34();

  PE1 pe1( v1, cb13, c2, cb34 );
  PE2 pe2( v1, cb13, c2, cb34 );

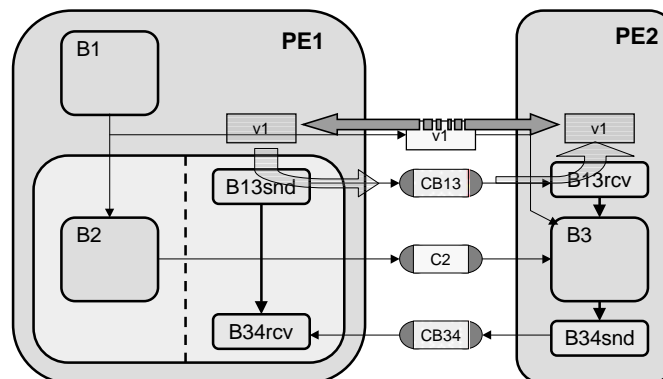
  void main(void) {
    par {
      pe1.main();
      pe2.main();
    };
  };
};

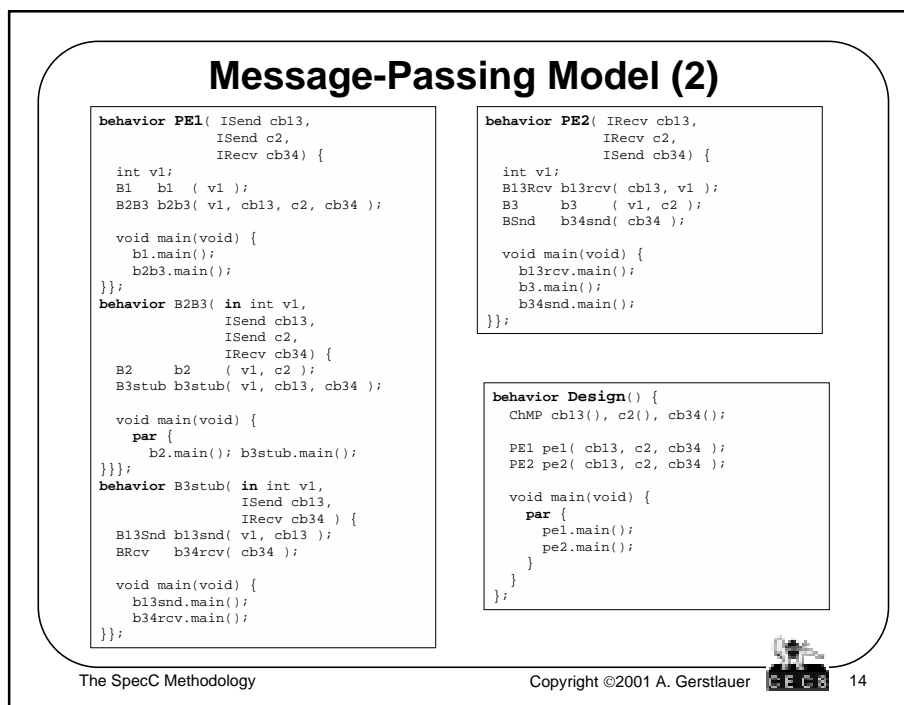
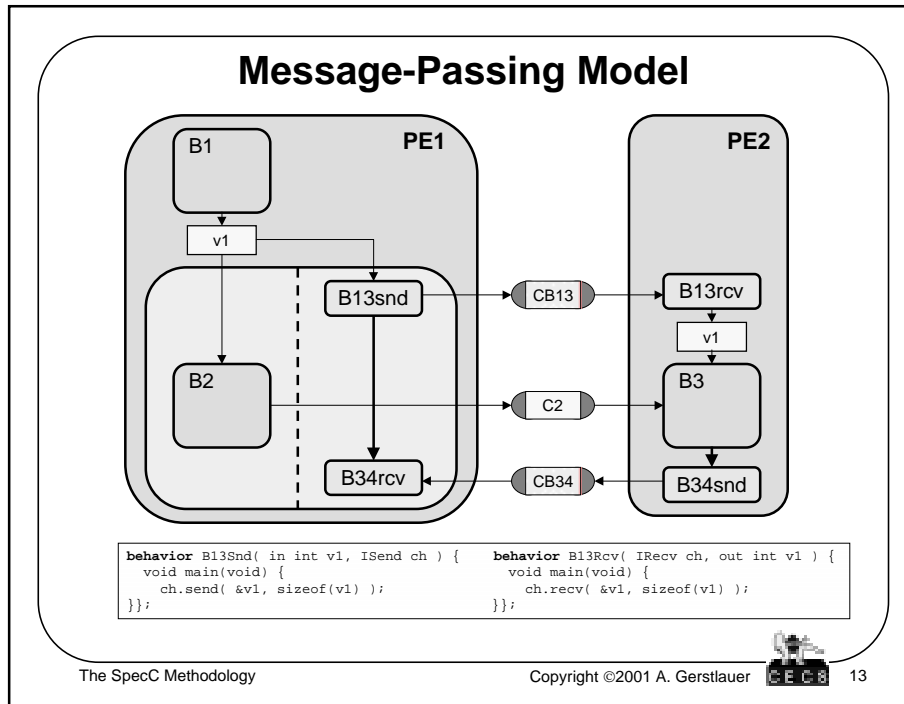
```



## Variable Partitioning

- Shared memory vs. message passing implementation
  - Map global variables to local memories
  - Communicate data over message-passing channels





## Estimated Execution Time

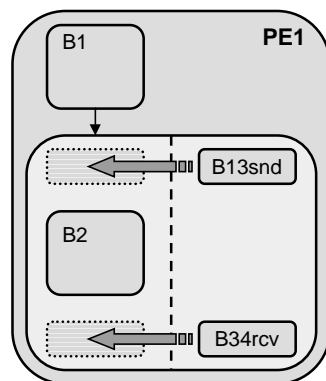
- **Estimate execution time**
  - Target execution delay
  - Timing budget
- **Annotate leaf behaviors**
  - Logical simulation time
  - Synthesis constraints
- **Granularity**
  - Behavior level
  - Basic block level

```
behavior B2( in int v1,
            ISend c2)
{
  void main(void) {
    ...
    waitfor( delay );
    if( ... ) {
      ...
      waitfor( delay );
    }
    else {
      ...
      waitfor( delay );
    }
    ...
    waitfor( delay );
    c2.send( ... );
    ...
    waitfor( delay );
    while( ... ) {
      ...
      waitfor( delay );
    }
    ...
    waitfor( delay );
  }
};
```



## Scheduling

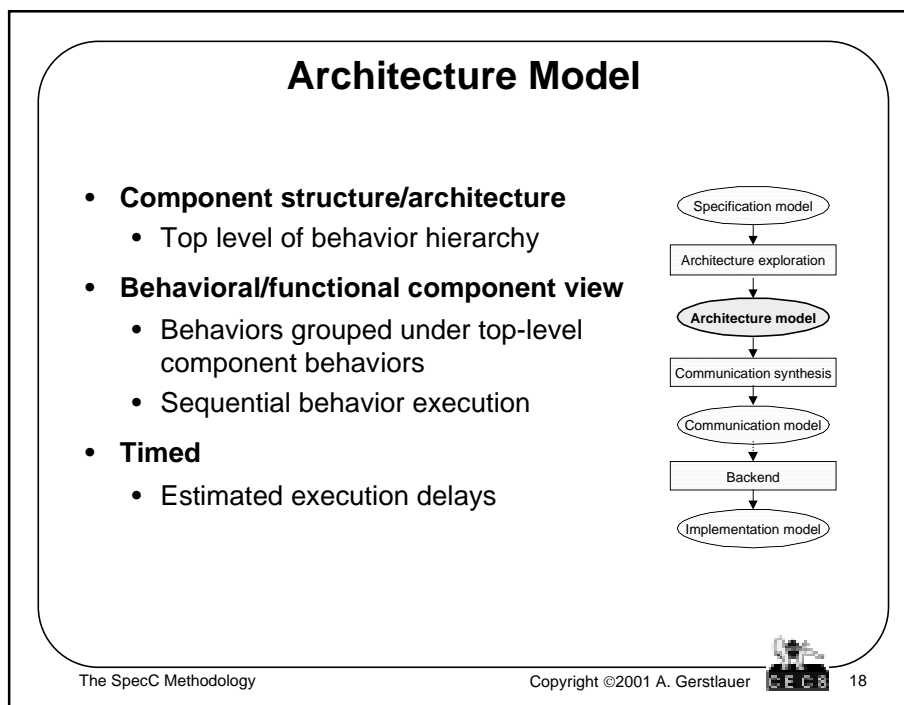
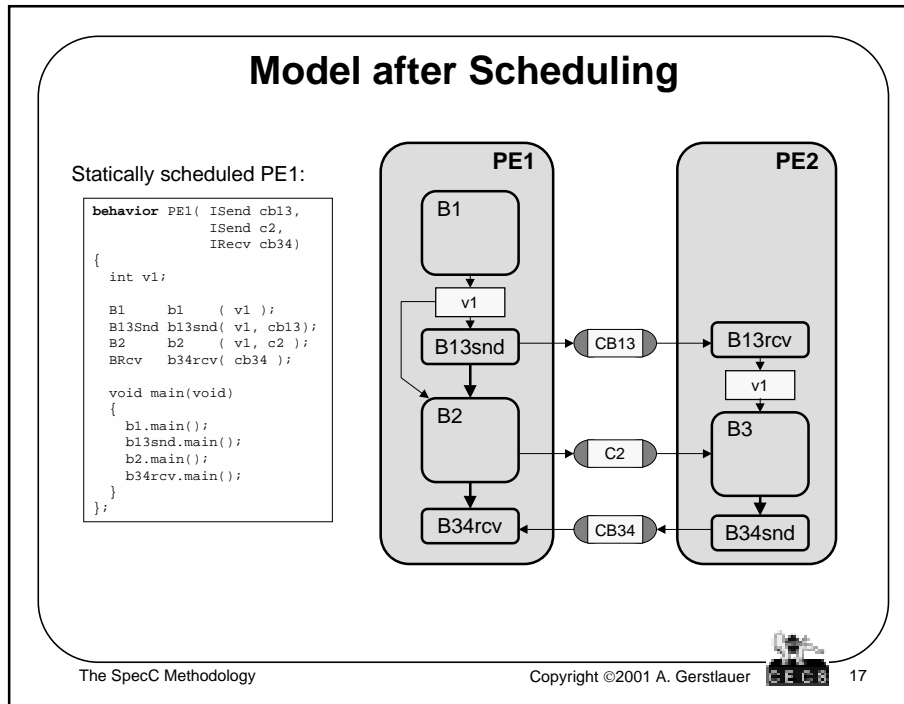
### ➤ Serialize behavior execution on components



- **Static scheduling**
  - Fixed behavior execution order
  - Flattened behavior hierarchy
- **Dynamic scheduling**
  - Pool of tasks
  - Scheduler, abstracted OS







## Communication Synthesis

- **Bus allocation / protocol selection**
- **Channel partitioning**
- **Protocol, transducer insertion**
- **Inlining**

```

graph TD
    A([Specification model]) --> B[Architecture exploration]
    B --> C([Architecture model])
    C --> D[Communication synthesis]
    D --> E([Communication model])
    E --> F[Backend]
    F --> G([Implementation model])
    
```

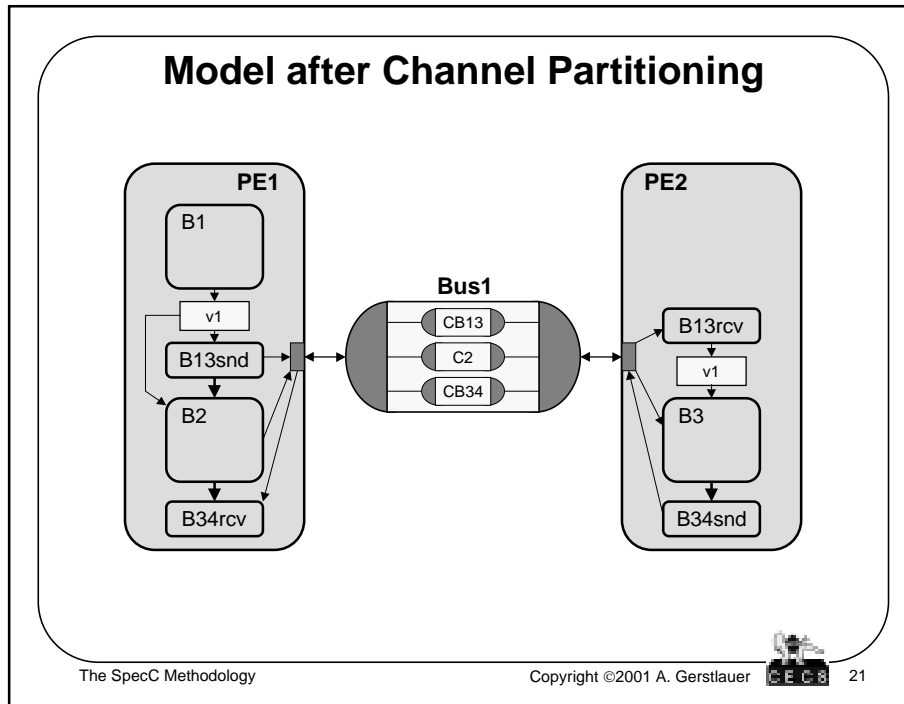
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## Bus Allocation / Channel Partitioning

- Allocate busses
- Partition channels
- Update communication

➤ **Additional level of hierarchy to model bus structure**

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### Model after Channel Partitioning (2)

**Bus channel:**

```

typedef enum { CB13, C2, CB34 } BusAddr;

interface IBus {
    void send( BusAddr addr, void* d, int size );
    void rcv( BusAddr addr, void* d, int size );
};

channel Bus1() implements IBus
{
    ChMP cb13(), c2(), cb34();

    void send( BusAddr addr, void* d, int size )
    {
        switch( addr ) {
            case CB13: return cb13.send( d, size );
            case C2:   return c2.send( d, size );
            case CB34: return cb34.send( d, size );
        }
    }
    void rcv( BusAddr addr, void* d, int size )
    {
        switch( addr ) {
            case CB13: return cb13.rcv( d, size );
            case C2:   return c2.rcv( d, size );
            case CB34: return cb34.rcv( d, size );
        }
    }
};
                
```

**Leaf behaviors:**

```

behavior B2( in int v1, IBus bus ) {
    void main(void) {
        ...
        bus.send( C2, ... );
        ...
    }
};

behavior B3( in int v1, IBus bus ) {
    void main(void) {
        ...
        bus.rcv( C2, ... );
        ...
    }
};

behavior B13Snd( in int v1, IBus bus ) {
    void main(void) {
        bus.send( CB13, &v1, sizeof(v1) );
    }
};

behavior B13Rcv( IBus bus, out int v1 ) {
    void main(void) {
        bus.rcv( CB13, &v1, sizeof(v1) );
    }
};

behavior B34Snd( IBus bus ) {
    void main(void) {
        bus.send( CB34, 0, 0 );
    }
};

behavior B13Rcv( IBus bus ) {
    void main(void) {
        bus.rcv( CB34, 0, 0 );
    }
};
                
```

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## Model after Channel Partitioning (3)

### Components:

```

behavior PE1( IBus bus1)
{
  int v1;
  B1 b1 ( v1 );
  B13Snd b13snd( v1, bus1);
  B2 b2 ( v1, bus1 );
  B34Rcv b34rcv( bus1 );

  void main(void) {
    b1.main();
    b13snd.main();
    b2.main();
    b34rcv.main();
  }
};

behavior PE2( IBus bus1)
{
  int v1;
  B13Rcv b13rcv( bus1, v1 );
  B3 b3 ( v1, bus1 );
  B34Snd b34snd( bus1 );

  void main(void) {
    b13rcv.main();
    b3.main();
    b34snd.main();
  }
};
    
```

### Design top level:

```

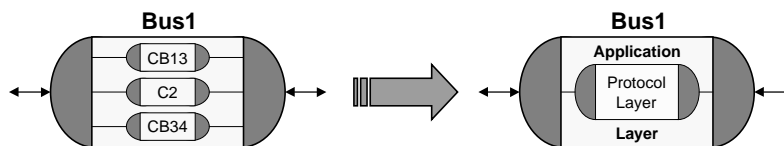
behavior Design()
{
  Bus1 bus1();

  PE1 pe1( bus1 );
  PE2 pe2( bus1 );

  void main(void) {
    par {
      pe1.main();
      pe2.main();
    }
  }
};
    
```

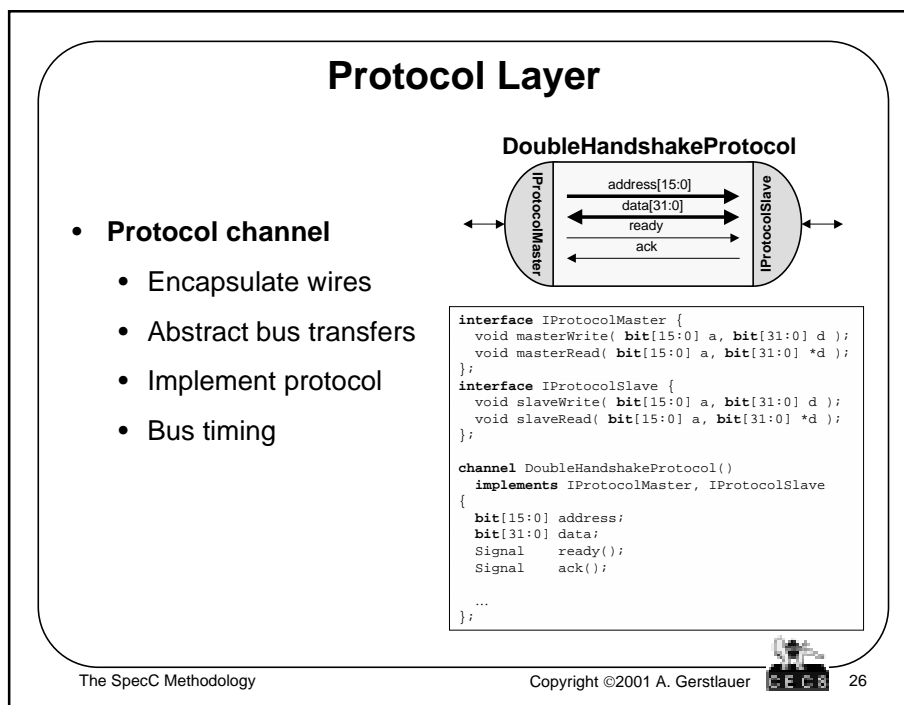
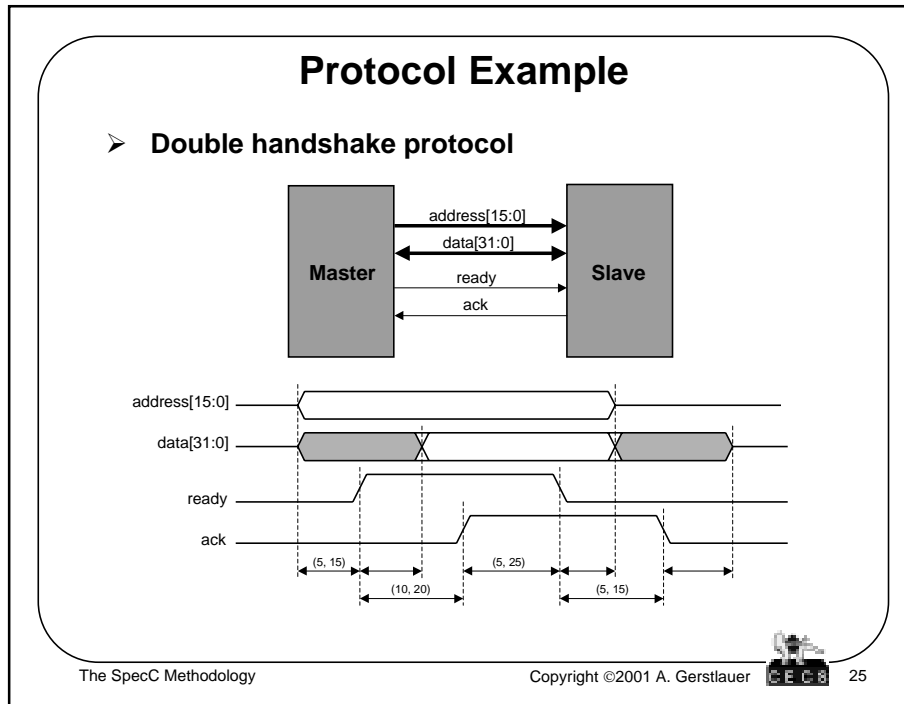


## Protocol Insertion



- **Insert protocol layer**
  - Protocol channel
- **Create application layer**
  - Implement message-passing over bus protocol
- **Replace bus channel**
  - Hierarchical bus channel





## Double Handshake Protocol Layer

**Master Interface:**

```

void masterWrite( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] d ) {
do {
t1: address = a;
data = d;
waitfor( 5 ); // estimated delay
t2: ready.set( 1 );
ack.waituntil( 1 );
t3: waitfor( 10 ); // estimated delay
t4: ready.set( 0 );
ack.waituntil( 0 );
} timing { // timing constraints
range( t1; t2; 5; 15 );
range( t3; t4; 10; 25 );
}}
void masterRead( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] *d ) {
do {
t1: address = a;
waitfor( 5 ); // estimated delay
t2: ready.set( 1 );
ack.waituntil( 1 );
t3: *d = data;
waitfor( 15 ); // estimated delay
t4: ready.set( 0 );
ack.waituntil( 0 );
} timing { // timing constraints
range( t1; t2; 5; 15 );
range( t3; t4; 10; 25 );
}}

```

**Slave Interface:**

```

void slaveWrite( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] d ) {
do {
t1: ready.waituntil( 1 );
t2: if( a != address ) goto t1;
data = d;
waitfor( 12 ); // estimated delay
t3: ack.set( 1 );
ready.waituntil( 0 );
t4: waitfor( 7 ); // estimated delay
t5: ack.set( 0 );
} timing { // timing constraint
range( t2; t3; 10; 20 );
range( t4; t5; 5; 15 );
}}
void slaveRead( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] *d ) {
do {
t1: ready.waituntil( 1 );
t2: if( a != address ) goto t1;
*d = data;
waitfor( 12 ); // estimated delay
t3: ack.set( 1 );
ready.waituntil( 0 );
t4: waitfor( 7 ); // estimated delay
t5: ack.set( 0 );
} timing { // timing constraint
range( t2; t3; 10; 20 );
range( t4; t5; 5; 15 );
}}

```

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## Application Layer

➤ Implement abstract message-passing over protocol

The diagram illustrates the flow of information from high-level behavior to low-level protocol signals:

- Behavior:** A sequence of **Computation**, **Comm./channel call**, and **Computation**. The communication call is associated with a **Send/receive data block**.
- Application Layer:** This layer maps the behavior to specific protocol events: **Sync** (intr/poll), **Arbitration** (req/ack), **Read/write meta data** (ID<sub>1</sub>, ID<sub>2</sub>, ..., ID<sub>n</sub>), **Read/write data words** (data<sub>1</sub>, data<sub>2</sub>, ..., data<sub>m</sub>), and **Sync/arbitr.** (release).
- Protocol Layer:** The physical signals on the bus, including **addr[]**, **data[]**, and **ctrl[]**.

**Message-passing**

**Bus transfer**

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### Example Application Layer

```

channel DoubleHandshakeBus() implements IBusMaster, IBusSlave {
    DoubleHandshakeProtocol protocol();

    void masterSend( int addr, void* d, int size ) {
        for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
            protocol.masterWrite( addr, (long)*d );
        }
    }
    void masterRecv( int addr, void* d, int size ) {
        for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
            protocol.masterRead( addr, (long*)d );
        }
    }

    void slaveSend( int addr, void* d, int size ) {
        for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
            protocol.slaveWrite( addr, (long)*d );
        }
    }
    void slaveRecv( int addr, void* d, int size ) {
        for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
            protocol.slaveRead( addr, (long*)d );
        }
    }
};
    
```

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### Model after Protocol Insertion

**Master**

PE1

**DoubleHandshakeBus**

DoubleHandshakeProtocol

**Slave**

PE2

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## Model after Protocol Insertion (2)

### Components:

```

behavior PE1( IBusMaster bus1 )
{
    int v1;
    B1    b1    ( v1 );
    B13Snd b13snd( v1, bus1 );
    B2    b2    ( v1, bus1 );
    B34Rcv b34rcv( bus1 );

    void main(void) {
        b1.main();
        b13snd.main();
        b2.main();
        b34rcv.main();
    }
};

behavior PE2( IBusSlave bus1 )
{
    int v1;
    B13Rcv b13rcv( bus1, v1 );
    B3    b3    ( v1, bus1 );
    B34Snd b34snd( bus1 );

    void main(void) {
        b13rcv.main();
        b3.main();
        b34snd.main();
    }
};

```

### Top level:

```

behavior Design()
{
    DoubleHandshakeBus bus1();

    PE1 pe1( bus1 );
    PE2 pe2( bus1 );

    void main(void) {
        par {
            pe1.main();
            pe2.main();
        }
    }
};

```



## Model after Protocol Insertion (3)

### PE1 leaf behaviors:

```

// PE1
behavior B2( in int v1, IBusMaster bus )
{
    void main(void) {
        ...
        bus.masterSend( C2, ... );
        ...
    }
};

behavior B13Snd( in int v1, IBusMaster bus )
{
    void main(void) {
        bus.masterSend( CB13, &v1, sizeof(v1) );
    }
};

behavior B13Rcv( IBusMaster bus )
{
    void main(void) {
        bus.masterRecv( CB34, 0, 0 );
    }
};

```

### PE2 leaf behaviors:

```

// PE2
behavior B3( in int v1, IBusSlave bus )
{
    void main(void) {
        ...
        bus.slaveRecv( C2, ... );
        ...
    }
};

behavior B13Rcv( IBusSlave bus, out int v1 )
{
    void main(void) {
        bus.slaveRecv( CB13, &v1, sizeof(v1) );
    }
};

behavior B34Snd( IBusSlave bus )
{
    void main(void) {
        bus.slaveSend( CB34, 0, 0 );
    }
};

```





### Transducer Insertion

➤ IP component with fixed protocol

```

behavior T1( IBusSlave b,
             IIPbus ip ) {
  int v1, ...;
  void main(void) {
    b.slaveReceive( CB13, &v1, ...);
    b.slaveReceive( C2, ... );
    ip.start( v1, ... );
    ip.done();
    b.slaveSend( CB34, 0, 0 );
  }
};
    
```

```

interface IIPBus {
  void start( int v1, ... );
  void done( void );
};
    
```

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### Inlining

- Move communication functionality into components

```

behavior Design()
{
  // wires
  bit[15:0] addr;
  bit[31:0] data;
  Signal ready(),
  Signal ack();

  PE1 pe1( addr,
          data,
          ready,
          ack );

  PE2 pe2( addr,
          data,
          ready,
          ack );

  void main(void)
  {
    par {
      pe1.main();
      pe2.main();
    }
  }
};
    
```

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## Model after Inlining (PE1)

```

channel PE1BusInterface( out bit[15:0] addr.
                        bit[31:0] data,
                        OSignal ready,
                        ISignal ack )

implements IProtocolMaster
{
void masterWrite( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] d ) {
...
}
void masterRead( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] *d ) {
...
}
};

channel PE1BusDriver( out bit[15:0] addr.
                     bit[31:0] data,
                     OSignal ready,
                     ISignal ack )

implements IBusMaster
{
PE1BusInterface protocol( addr, data, ready, ack );

void masterSend(int addr, void* d, int size) {
for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
protocol.masterWrite( addr, (long)*d );
waitfor( ...);
}
}
void masterReceive(int addr, void* d, int size) {
for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
protocol.masterRead( addr, (long*)d );
waitfor( ...);
}
}
};

```

```

behavior PE1( out bit[15:0] addr.
             bit[31:0] data,
             OSignal ready,
             ISignal ack )
{
PE1BusDriver bus( addr, data,
                 ready, ack );

int v1;

B1 b1 ( v1 );
B13Snd b13snd( v1, bus );
B2 b2 ( v1, bus );
B34Rcv b34rcv( bus );

void main(void) {
b1.main();
b13snd.main();
b2.main();
b34rcv.main();
}
};

```

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## Model after Inlining (PE2)

```

channel PE2BusInterface( in bit[15:0] addr.
                        bit[31:0] data,
                        ISignal ready,
                        OSignal ack )

implements IProtocolSlave
{
void slaveWrite( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] d ) {
...
}
void slaveRead( bit[15:0] a, bit[31:0] *d ) {
...
}
};

channel PE2BusDriver( in bit[15:0] addr.
                     bit[31:0] data,
                     ISignal ready,
                     OSignal ack )

implements IBusSlave
{
PE2BusInterface protocol( addr, data, ready, ack );

void slaveSend(int addr, void* d, int size) {
for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
protocol.slaveWrite( addr, (long)*d );
waitfor( ...);
}
}
void slaveReceive(int addr, void* d, int size) {
for( ; size > 0; size -= 4, ((long*)d)++ ) {
protocol.slaveRead( addr, (long*)d );
waitfor( ...);
}
}
};

```

```

behavior PE2( in bit[15:0] addr.
             bit[31:0] data,
             ISignal ready,
             OSignal ack )
{
PE2BusDriver bus( addr, data,
                 ready, ack );

int v1;

B13Rcv b13rcv( bus, v1 );
B3 b3 ( v1, bus );
B34Snd b34snd( bus );

void main(void) {
b13rcv.main();
b3.main();
b34snd.main();
}
};

```

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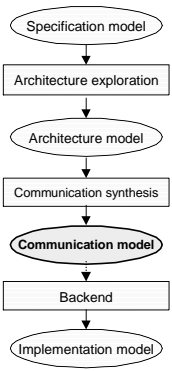
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### Communication Model

- **Component & bus structure/architecture**
  - Top level of hierarchy
- **Bus-functional component models**
  - Timing-accurate bus protocols
  - Behavioral component description
- **Timed**
  - Estimated component delays



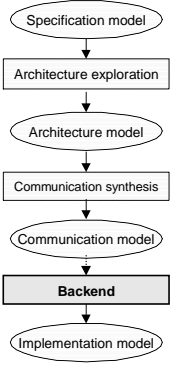
```
graph TD; A([Specification model]) --> B[Architecture exploration]; B --> C([Architecture model]); C --> D[Communication synthesis]; D --> E([Communication model]); E --> F[Backend]; F --> G([Implementation model]);
```

The flowchart illustrates the Communication Model process. It starts with a 'Specification model' (oval), followed by 'Architecture exploration' (rectangle), 'Architecture model' (oval), 'Communication synthesis' (rectangle), 'Communication model' (oval), 'Backend' (rectangle), and finally 'Implementation model' (oval). The 'Communication model' step is highlighted with a bold border.

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### Backend

- **Clock-accurate implementation of PEs**
  - Hardware synthesis
  - Software development
  - Interface synthesis



```
graph TD; A([Specification model]) --> B[Architecture exploration]; B --> C([Architecture model]); C --> D[Communication synthesis]; D --> E([Communication model]); E --> F[Backend]; F --> G([Implementation model]);
```

The flowchart illustrates the Backend process. It follows the same sequence as the Communication Model: 'Specification model' (oval), 'Architecture exploration' (rectangle), 'Architecture model' (oval), 'Communication synthesis' (rectangle), 'Communication model' (oval), 'Backend' (rectangle), and 'Implementation model' (oval). The 'Backend' step is highlighted with a bold border.

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## Hardware Synthesis

**PE2**

B13rcv

↓

v1

↓

B3

↓

B34snd

- **Schedule operations into clock cycles**
  - Define clock boundaries in leaf behavior C code
  - Create FSM model from scheduled C code

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## Scheduled Hardware Model

**Hierarchical FSM:**

```

behavior B3( in int v1, IBusSlave bus )
{
void main(void) {
enum { S0, S1, S2, ..., Sn } state = S0;

while( state != Sn )
{
waitfor( PE2_CLK ); // wait for clock edge

switch( state ) {
...
case S_i:
r1 = v1; // memory read
if( r0 )
state = S_{i+1};
else
state = S_{j+2};
break;
case S_{i+1}: // receive message
bus.slaveReceive( C2, ... );
state = S_{i+2};
break;
case S_{j+2}:
r0 += r1; // ALU operation
state = S_{i+3};
break;
...
}}
};

```

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## Hardware Interface Synthesis

- Specification: timing diagram / constraints**

- FSM implementation: clock cycles**

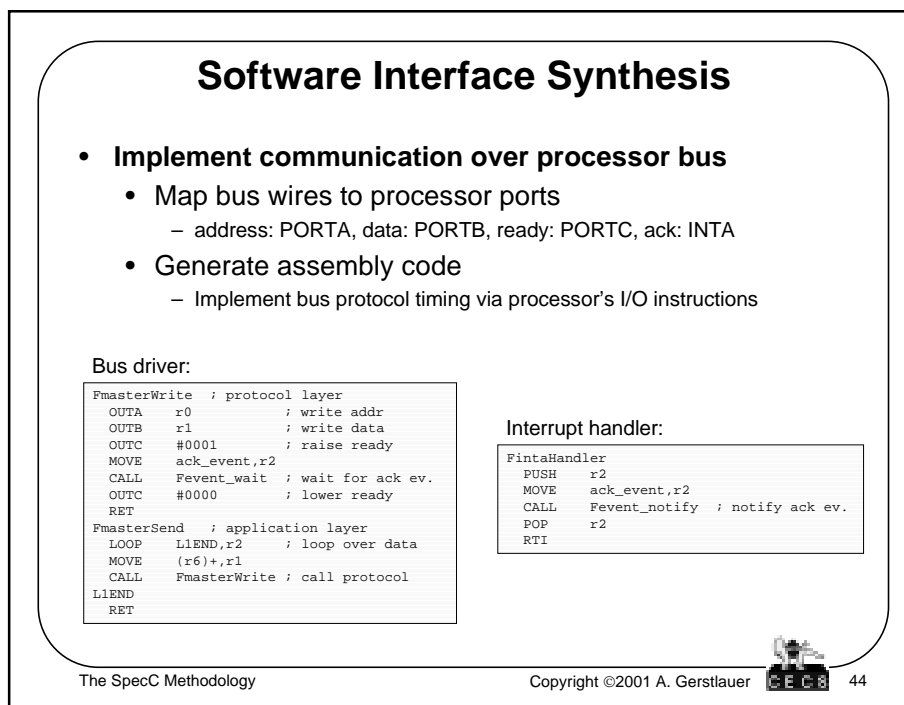
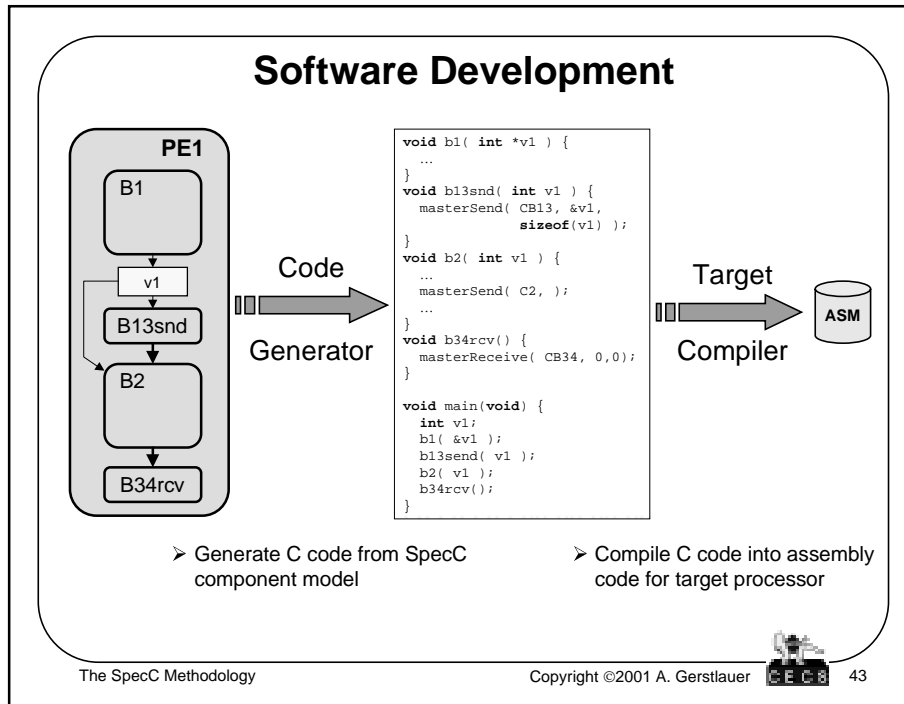
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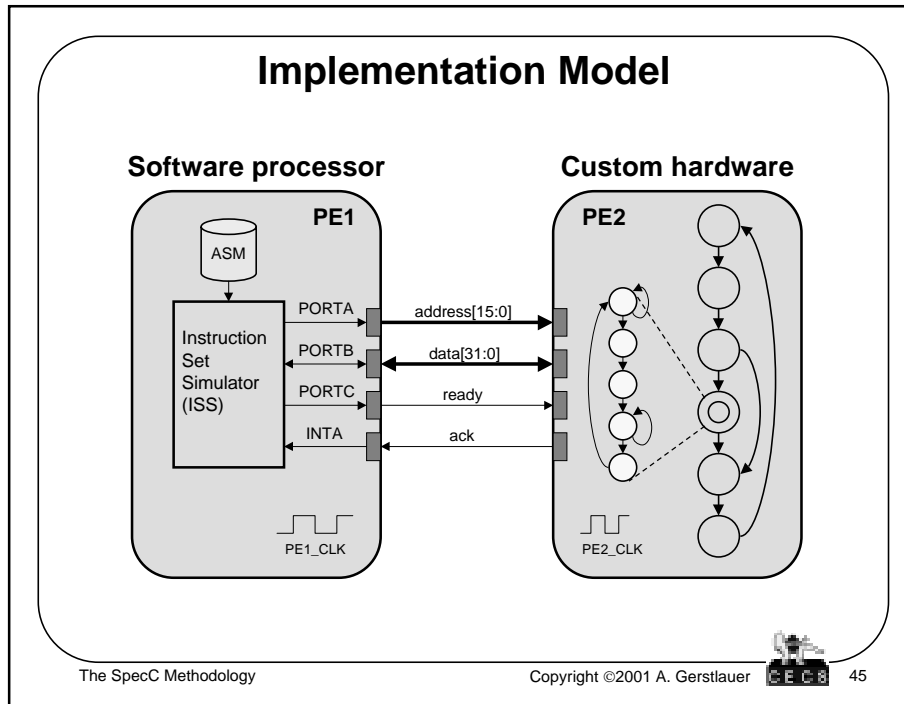
## Hardware Interface FSM

```

channel HWBusDriver( in bit[15:0] addr, bit[31:0] data,
                    ISignal ready, OSignal ack )
implements IBusSlave
{
void slaveSend( int a, void* d, int size ) {
enum { S0, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 } state = S0;
while( state != S5 ) {
waitfor( PE2_CLK ); // wait for clock edge
switch( state ) {
case S0: // sample ready, address
if( ready.val() == 1 ) && (addr == a) state = S1;
break;
case S1: // read memory, drive data bus
data = *((long*)d)++;
state = S2;
break;
case S2: // raise ack, advance counter
ack.set( 1 );
size--;
state = S3;
break;
case S3: // sample ready
if( ready.val() == 0 ) state = S4;
break;
case S4: // reset ack, loop condition
ack.set( 0 );
if( size != 0 ) state = S0 else state = S5;
}
}
}
void slaveReceive( int a, void* d, int size ) { ... }
};
    
```

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### Implementation Model (2)

```

#include <iss.h> // ISS API

behavior PE1( out bit[15:0] addr,
             bit[31:0] data,
             OSignal ready,
             ISignal ack ) {

void main(void) {
// initialize ISS, load program
iss.startup();
iss.load("a.out");

// run simulation
for( ; ; ) {
// drive inputs
iss.porta = addr;
iss.portb = data;
iss.inta = ack.val();

// run processor cycle
iss.exec();
waitFor( PE1_CLK );

// update outputs
data = iss.portb;
ready.set( iss.portc & 0x01 );
}
};

behavior PE2( in bit[15:0] addr, bit[31:0] data,
             ISignal ready, OSignal ack )
{
// Interface FSM
HWBusDriver bus( addr, data, ready, ack );

int v1; // memory

B13Rcv b13rcv( bus, v1 ); // FSMs
B3 b3 ( v1, bus );
B34Snd b34snd( bus );

void main(void) {
b13rcv.main();
b3.main();
b34snd.main();
}
};

behavior Design() {
bit[15:0] address; bit[31:0] data;
Signal ready(), ack();
PE1 pe1( address, data, ready, ack );
PE2 pe2( address, data, ready, ack );
void main(void) {
par {
pe1.main(); pe2.main();
}
};
}
    
```

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## Implementation Model

- **Cycle-accurate system description**
  - RTL description of hardware
    - Behavioral/structural FSM/D view
  - Assembly code for processors
    - Instruction-set co-simulation
  - Clocked bus communication
    - Bus interface timing based on PE clock

```
graph TD; A([Specification model]) --> B[Architecture exploration]; B --> C([Architecture model]); C --> D[Communication synthesis]; D --> E([Communication model]); E --> F[Backend]; F --> G([Implementation model]); style G stroke-width:4px
```

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## Summary & Conclusions

- **SpecC system-level design methodology & language**
  - Four levels of abstraction
    - Specification model: untimed, functional
    - Architecture model: estimated, structural
    - Communication model: timed, bus-functional
    - Implementation model: cycle-accurate, RTL/IS
  - Specification to RTL
    - System synthesis
      1. Architecture exploration (map computation to components)
      2. Communication synthesis (map communication to busses)
    - Backend
      3. hardware synthesis, software compilation, interface synthesis
  - Well-defined, formal models & transformations
    - Automatic, gradual refinement
    - Executable models, testbench re-use
    - Simple verification

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